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THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED VALUE, BRAND COMMUNICATION, AND BRAND IMAGE ON CONSUMER TRUST IN THE HONDA BRAND

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of perceived value and brand communication on brand trust, with brand image serving as a mediating variable in the context of the Honda brand. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 200 respondents who are consumers of Honda products. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that perceived value has a positive and significant effect on brand trust, as well as a positive and significant effect on Honda's brand image. Moreover, brand image mediates the relationship between perceived value and brand trust. In addition, brand communication is found to have a positive and significant effect on both brand image and brand trust. The study also confirms that brand image has a positive and significant effect on brand trust and plays a mediating role in the relationship between brand communication and brand trust. These findings underscore the strategic importance of building strong brand image as a bridge between value perception, communication efforts, and consumer trust in the Honda brand.

Keywords: Perceived Value, Brand Communication, Brand Image, Brand Trust.

ABSTRAK

Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh nilai yang dirasakan dan komunikasi merek terhadap kepercayaan merek, dengan citra merek berfungsi sebagai variabel mediasi dalam konteks merek Honda. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif, data dikumpulkan dari 200 responden yang merupakan konsumen produk Honda. Data dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa nilai yang dirasakan memiliki efek positif dan signifikan terhadap kepercayaan merek, serta efek positif dan signifikan terhadap citra merek Honda. Selain itu, citra merek memediasi hubungan antara nilai yang dirasakan dan kepercayaan merek. Selain itu, komunikasi merek ditemukan memiliki efek positif dan signifikan terhadap citra merek dan kepercayaan merek. Studi ini juga menegaskan bahwa citra merek memiliki efek positif dan signifikan terhadap kepercayaan merek dan memainkan peran mediasi dalam hubungan antara komunikasi merek dan kepercayaan merek. Temuan ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya strategis membangun citra merek yang kuat sebagai jembatan antara persepsi nilai, upaya komunikasi, dan kepercayaan konsumen terhadap merek Honda.

Kata kunci: nilai yang dirasakan, komunikasi merek, citra merek, kepercayaan merek

1. Introduction

In today's highly competitive market, brands aim to set themselves apart not only by offering high-quality products but also by cultivating and sustaining consumer trust. Trust in a brand has emerged as a vital intangible asset for building enduring customer relationships, especially as consumers increasingly prioritize factors such as satisfaction, perceived value, customer service, brand reputation, and sustainable practices when making purchasing decisions (Gurviez & Korchia, 2003; Huang & Cai, 2015). Adopting sustainable business strategies that address environmental, social, and economic concerns can enhance customer loyalty, provide a competitive edge, strengthen brand trust, and support effective green marketing efforts (e.g., Apaza-Panca et al., 2024). These practices may also positively impact a company's financial outcomes (Lee & Suh, 2022). Nonetheless, despite the recognized significance of brand trust, there is still uncertainty about which specific factors most effectively reinforce it and how they collectively shape consumer behavior.

Previous research has thoroughly explored the connection between perceived value and brand trust. According to Bigné et al. (2000) and Gale (1994), perceived value—defined as the consumer's assessment of the benefits received relative to the costs incurred—is essential for standing out in a crowded marketplace. Further studies by Brady et al.

(2005) and Lu et al. (2011) indicate that perceived value not only contributes to customer satisfaction but also directly influences trust in a brand, particularly when it comes to green and sustainable brands. Lin (2022) highlights that innovation within green brands, along with strong perceived value, plays a significant role in shaping a positive green brand image and reinforcing consumer perceptions of sustainability. Nevertheless, there remains a lack of clarity regarding how perceived value interacts with other key factors—such as customer service, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and brand image—to build and sustain consumer trust.

Customer satisfaction is widely recognized as a crucial factor in shaping brand trust and fostering customer loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009; Molinillo et al., 2019). However, there is ongoing debate in the literature regarding the extent to which satisfaction serves as a mediator between customer service and brand trust (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2001; Qin et al., 2009). While some researchers argue that satisfaction naturally results from high-quality customer service (Murali et al., 2016), others propose that its influence on trust may depend on additional elements such as perceived value and corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts (Sebastián-Morillas et al., 2024). Huo (2022) points out that CSR initiatives play a vital role in shaping both trust and brand loyalty, which subsequently affect consumers' intentions to make sustainable purchases. This study aims to address this gap by examining how these variables interact and collectively influence brand trust.

An important yet underexplored area in existing research is the role of brand communication strategies—particularly those focused on sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR)—in shaping a strong brand image and, subsequently, influencing consumer trust (Villagra et al., 2015, 2021; Thanh et al., 2023). While effective communication is widely acknowledged as vital for enhancing brand image and fostering consumer identification with the brand, there is still limited research on how this dynamicimpacts trust (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019; Kotler, 2002; Rangel-Pérez et al., 2022). Thanh et al. (2023) further emphasize that CSR efforts significantly contribute to building brand trust and loyalty—both of which are crucial for the success of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing markets. Accordingly, this study seeks to explore and clarify the link between communication strategies, brand image, and consumer trust.

In conclusion, although brand trust has been widely studied, there remains a notable gap in understanding how customer service, perceived value, satisfaction, and brand image interact to influence consumer trust—especially within the realm of sustainable brands. While earlier research has explored these factors individually (e.g., Brady et al., 2005; Lu et al., 2011), this study contributes to the field by incorporating sustainability-focused brand communication as a central component in the development of trust. Unlike previous studies that largely concentrate on traditional brands, our research specifically examines the impact of sustainability-driven communication strategies on shaping brand image and fostering consumer trust. This perspective offers a novel approach to understanding trust formation in light of growing consumer expectations for authenticity and ethical brand behavior.

Drawing on the gaps highlighted in existing research, this study sets out to investigate the interconnections between perceived value, customer satisfaction, customer service, brand image, and brand trust, aiming to offer a holistic understanding of the key drivers behind consumer trust in brands. A core objective is to examine how satisfaction mediates the link between customer service and trust, shedding light on the ways in which positive consumer experiences help foster trust. Furthermore, the study explores how communication strategies influence brand image and, in turn, affect consumer trust—placing particular emphasis on the role of sustainability-focused messaging in cultivating a responsible and favorable brand image. By pursuing these goals, the research addresses critical shortcomings in the literature related to trust-building in brand management and proposes a framework applicable to sustainability-driven branding strategies, in

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line with the rising expectations of ethically and socially aware consumers.

The study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze data collected from a sample of 1,280 Spanish participants aged 18 and above, using a questionnaire built on established, validated measurement scales. This methodological approach enabled the accurate and reliable testing of the proposed conceptual model and research hypotheses.

The findings reveal that perceived value, customer satisfaction, service quality, CSR efforts, and brand image all have a significant and positive influence on consumer trust. Additionally, the analysis confirms that customer service is strongly linked to satisfaction, and that communication strategies—particularly those highlighting sustainability efforts—directly enhance brand image. The study also identifies satisfaction as a mediating factor between customer service and trust, with CSR initiatives further reinforcing this mediation effect.

The structure of the article is as follows: the next section reviews the relevant literature and outlines the research hypotheses. This is followed by a description of the methodology, then the presentation of empirical findings. The discussion section interprets the results in the context of previous studies and outlines both theoretical and practical implications. The article concludes with a summary of key insights and recommendations for future research.

2. Literature review and hypotheses development

Customer Brand Relationship

Customer Brand Relationship (CBR) theory conceptualizes the bond between consumers and brands as similar to interpersonal relationships, incorporating elements such as trust, satisfaction, commitment, and emotional attachment. According to Fournier (1998), consumers form relationships with brands that range in depth and emotional intensity, much like relationships with people, and these relationships significantly influence consumer behavior, including loyalty and advocacy. Brands that successfully build trust and meet emotional as well as functional needs are more likely to foster long-term, meaningful consumer relationships (Fournier, 1998; Aaker, Fournier, & Brasel, 2004). This theoretical framework underscores the importance of brand trust and communication—key constructs explored in Monfort et al. (2025)—as essential for developing and maintaining strong customer-brand relationships.

Perceived Value

Perceived value is a key psychological construct in consumer behavior research that reflects the customer's evaluation of the trade-off between what is received (benefits) and what is given up (costs), which may be monetary, time-related, or emotional (Zeithaml, 1988). This value is not limited to price or functionality alone—it also includes emotional, social, and symbolic dimensions that vary depending on the context and the consumer's expectations. In the brand relationship domain, perceived value is central to how consumers assess the desirability and reliability of a brand, which ultimately influences their behavioral intentions, including trust, satisfaction, and loyalty (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Kuo et al., 2009).

From a relational perspective, perceived value influences the strength and quality of the customer-brand relationship. Brands that consistently deliver high value—whether through performance, emotional experiences, sustainability, or social benefits—are more likely to foster positive perceptions and trust (Chen et al., 2015; Lam et al., 2013). Moreover, the value perceived by consumers is shaped by various brand characteristics, such as brand personality (sincerity, competence), ethical conduct, and transparent communication (Sung & Kim, 2010; Kang & Hustvedt, 2014). Research also supports that perceived value plays both a direct and indirect role in influencing brand trust, and serves as a key antecedent to consumer satisfaction and brand image (Sebastián-Morillas et al., 2024; Kusumawati et al., 2019). Thus, understanding perceived value in a holistic and multi-dimensional way is essential for building consumer trust and long-term brand commitment.

Brand Communication

Competence reflects product quality and reliability, while benevolence and integrity are shown through consumer responsiveness and honest communication (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2001; Nikbin et al., 2022). Sustainability enhances perceptions of benevolence and integrity, reinforcing trust by demonstrating responsibility to consumers and stakeholders (Mal et al., 2018; Miquel-Segarra et al., 2023). Satisfaction and corporate credibility, especially in sustainable initiatives, further foster trust (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2001; Sichtmann, 2007), Effective CSR communication bolsters transparency and brand perception, with consistent, honest messaging reinforcing integrity and competence (Keller & Lehmann, 2006; Kotler, 2002). encompasses evaluations of competence, benevolence, and integrity relating to products and companies (Basso & Pizzutti, 2016; Mal et al., 2018)

Brand Image

Strengthening a brand's personality through communication that emphasizes sustainability helps create a more positive and relatable brand image. When a brand clearly communicates its commitment to sustainable practices—such as environmental responsibility, ethical sourcing, or social initiatives—it shapes how consumers perceive the brand's character and values. This alignment between the brand's actions and consumer values builds authenticity and emotional connection, making the brand appear more sincere, trustworthy, and responsible. As a result, consumers are more likely to develop trust in the brand, seeing it not just as a provider of products or services, but as a socially conscious entity that shares their concerns for the environment and society. This trust becomes a strong foundation for long-term customer loyalty and positive brand reputation. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Villagra et al., 2021)

Trust

Brand trust, a multifaceted concept studied as both belief and intention (Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2011; Mal & Davies, 2022), Trust as intention—willingness to depend under risk—is often measured via purchase intention, built on competence, benevolence, and alignment with consumer expectations, including sustainability (Mayer et al., 1995; Clemente-Mediavilla & Sebastián-Morillas, 2018). Cognitive and affective trust are influenced by corporate competence and moderated by peer influence and brand-consumer similarity (Ozdemir et al., 2020). These traits reflecting ability, benevolence, and integrity at product and company levels underpin brand trust (Mal et al., 2018), yet rising sustainability awareness and evolving stakeholder relations necessitate reassessing their effectiveness in trust-building.

Hipotheses development

Perceived value essentially represents an individual's overall assessment of a brand's significance, which is formed through direct experiences with the brand or anticipated future use (Cocosila & Igonor, 2015). Many previous studies have utilized the concept of perceived value to examine its influence on consumer trust (Brady et al., 2005; Lu et al., 2011). Additionally, research has shown that satisfaction often results directly from perceived value, and together, these factors have a substantial impact on consumer behavior (Sebastián-Morillas et al., 2024).

From a financial standpoint, customer perceived value is defined as the difference between the maximum price a customer is willing to pay for a product and the actual cost incurred (Kuo et al., 2009). In terms of quality, it reflects the customer's overall judgment of the benefits received from a product compared to what is given up or sacrificed (Zeithaml, 1988). Socially, perceived value is related to the product's capacity to enhance an individual's self-image or social standing within their community (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Additionally, emotional perceived value arises from the customer's experiences and interactions with the product (Kusumawati et al., 2019). This comprehensive perspective highlights the crucial role of perceived value in distinguishing a brand from competitors and boosting business success (Gale, 1994; Monroe, 1990).

Perceived value plays a crucial role in shaping brand trust and is a fundamental element in the relationship between consumers and brands (Chae et al., 2020). Research supports the idea that perceived value mediates the link between customer service and satisfaction, thereby affecting consumer trust (Sebastián-Morillas et al., 2024). When customers perceive high brand value, they are more likely to participate in activities that support the brand, strengthening their connection and identification with it (Chen et al., 2015). Moreover, customer loyalty to a brand increases when the brand provides a feeling of security, which in turn boosts perceived value (Lam & Shankar, 2014) and draws consumers toward brands that align with their personal values (Lam et al., 2013).

Considering that perceived value includes various aspects such as product quality, the relevance of information, and emotional connection, it is logical to suggest that this perceived value positively affects customers' likelihood of trusting the brand (Gurviez & Korchia, 2003; Huang & Cai, 2015). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Perceived value on consumer trust in the Honda brand.

Perceived value is understood as the customer's evaluation of a brand's usefulness, weighing what they receive in benefits against what they give up in terms of cost, effort, or time. This perception goes beyond monetary value and includes emotional satisfaction and symbolic benefits that consumers associate with the brand. When individuals feel that the brand consistently delivers meaningful experiences and advantages, their inclination to place trust in that brand becomes stronger.

In the case of Honda, when consumers perceive high value through aspects like reliability, innovation, affordability, or driving experience, this creates a foundation for trust. Previous studies suggest that trust is more likely to develop when a brand meets or exceeds consumers' expectations of value (Brady et al., 2005; Lu et al., 2011). Thus, perceived value acts as an essential driver that strengthens consumers' belief in Honda's credibility and dependability.

H1. Perceived value has a positive and significant effect on consumer trust in the Honda brand.

Perceived value on Honda's brand image, and Honda's brand image mediates the relationship between perceived value and consumer trust in the Honda brand.

Consumers tend to build positive impressions of a brand when they consistently perceive high value from its offerings. This value can stem from quality products, excellent service, or emotional benefits. Over time, these experiences contribute to the formation of a favorable brand image, which reflects the overall reputation and personality that consumers associate with the brand.

Additionally, this brand image becomes an important bridge between perceived value and trust. When consumers view a brand like Honda in a positive light, based on the value they receive, they are more likely to trust the brand. The better the image Honda projects—through quality, consistency, and alignment with customer expectations—the more likely consumers are to develop and sustain trust. Therefore, brand image plays a critical mediating role in reinforcing the influence of perceived value on trust.

H2. Perceived value has a positive and significant effect on Honda's brand image, and Honda's brand image mediates the relationship between perceived value and consumer trust in the Honda brand.

Brand communication on Honda's brand image, and Honda's brand image mediates the relationship between brand communication and consumer trust in the Honda brand.

How a brand communicates with its audience—whether through advertisements, corporate messaging, or sustainability campaigns—has a major impact on how the brand is perceived. Effective brand communication helps convey the brand's values, vision, and promises clearly and authentically. When done well, it can shape a strong and consistent brand image in the minds of consumers.

For Honda, communicating its commitment to safety, innovation, and social responsibility helps build a positive brand image. This image then serves as a channel through which communication influences trust. Consumers are more inclined to trust a brand that not only communicates consistently but also lives up to the image it presents. Thus, brand communication indirectly fosters trust

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by enhancing and supporting a strong brand image.

H3. Brand communication has a positive and significant effect on Honda's brand image, and Honda's brand image mediates the relationship between brand communication and consumer trust in the Honda brand.

Brand communication on consumer trust in the Honda brand.

Beyond influencing brand image, brand communication directly contributes to building consumer trust. When a brand delivers transparent, honest, and value-based messages, it strengthens its credibility in the eyes of consumers. Communicating commitments such as environmental care, ethical conduct, and customer well-being reassures consumers that the brand is trustworthy and accountable.

For a brand like Honda, consistent and purposeful communication helps close the gap between company actions and consumer expectations. This consistency builds a sense of integrity and dependability, leading consumers to place greater confidence in the brand. In this way, brand communication functions as more than just marketing—it becomes a powerful tool for reinforcing consumer trust.

H4. Brand communication has a positive and significant effect on consumer trust in the Honda brand

Honda's brand image on consumer trust in the Honda brand.

Brand image reflects the collective perceptions and feelings that consumers associate with a brand, shaped over time through their experiences and exposure. A positive brand image implies that consumers see the brand as reliable, ethical, and aligned with their needs and values. This positive perception helps reduce uncertainty and builds confidence in the brand.

In Honda's case, a favorable brand image—built on trust, product quality, environmental responsibility, and customer focus—leads to greater trust from consumers. The stronger and more consistent the brand image, the more likely consumers are to believe in the brand's promises and continue their relationship with it. Therefore, maintaining a trustworthy and appealing brand image is essential to sustaining consumer trust.

H5. Honda's brand image has a positive and significant effect on consumer trust in the Honda brand.

3. Research design

Research Framework

This framework investigates the effect of Perceived value and Brand Communication on Trust through Brand Image. First, this study attempts to verify the relationship between Perceived value and Trust. Second, it examines the influence of Perceived value on Brand Image. Third, this study examine the effect of Brand Image on Trust. Fouth, it examine the effect of Brand Communication on Trust. Finaly this study investigate the effect of Brand Communication on Brand Image and in turn, the effect of Brand Image on Trust. Figure 2 depicts the purposed model.

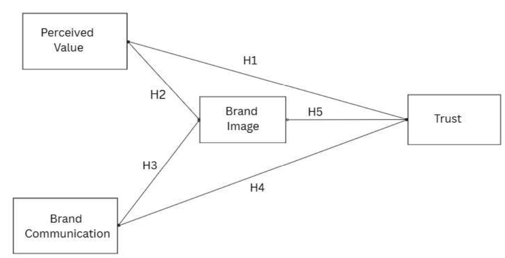

Figure 1. Research Framework

Sample and respondent profile

This survey employs structured questionnaires to identify Perceive Value and Brand Communication on Trust via Brand Image. The framework includes four constructs that were measured by multiple items. All the responses of the respondents were measured using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). For the data collection, Google Forms were distributed to participants selected using the purposive sampling methods via online media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, or email from May to June 2025. A total of 390 respondents participating in this survey. All the data are complete and available for analysis.

Data collection and analysis

This study distributed a questionnaire to participants using platforms such as email, WhatsApp and LinkedIn. This diverse approach offered flexibility and convenience to the participants, allowing them to answer the survey using their modes of communication. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was used to analyse the survey information and describe the participants' demographics. Descriptive statistics helped researchers summarize and present the data effectively while we examined the study variables through the partial least square (PLS) algorithm and bootstrapping using the PLS software. These statistical methods were applied to test the hypotheses proposed in this study. The partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) technique is more suitable for handling simple and complex models (Rehman et al., 2023). The outcomes of the PLS model are deemed more f itting than the ordinary least squares model, where the sample is small, and data could have multicollinearity issues (Rehman et al., 2022). PLS-SEM is extensively used by several researchers in different areas (Sawheny, 2023; Rusidah, 2023; Muthuswamy and Varshika, 2023; Altememy et al., 2023; Hartoto et al., 2023; Awad and Ibrahim, 2023; Hajar et al., 2023; GhalebandAlshiha,2023).

Measurement

This framework adopted a measurement scale from previous studies with high reliability and validity for all constructs. The construct of Perceived value was assessed using the Johnson et al. (2006) scale, which measures consumers' perception of the value for money of their favorite brands. Brand communication was assessed using the Sahin et al. (2011) scale, which captures consumers' attitudes toward advertising and promotion of their favorite brands. Brand image was measured using the Martínez-Salinas and Pina-Perez (2009) scale, which examines the perception of quality, distinctive characteristics and strength in the market. Finally, brand trust was assessed using the Gurviez and Korchia (2003) scale, which includes items on safety, honesty and the commitment of brands to their consumers. This questionnaire was designed to ensure the validity and reliability of the measures, accurately capturing each key construct according to brand trust theory. All responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," with reverse coding applied where necessary. The sample was initially composed of 390 participants.

4. Discussion

The study's findings confirm Hypothesis H1**,** which asserts that perceived value significantly and positively influences consumer trust in the Honda brand. This outcome is consistent with prior research that identifies perceived value as a crucial factor in establishing trust (Brady et al., 2005; Lu et al., 2011; Chae et al., 2020). The strong relationship between perceived value and trust indicates that when customers view Honda's products, services, and brand commitments as offering substantial value, they are more inclined to trust the brand. This connection can be understood through the diverse dimensions of perceived value. From a financial standpoint, consumers weigh costs against benefits, and a favorable trade-off boosts their trust in the brand's dependability (Kuo et al., 2009). In terms of quality and functionality, Honda's consistent delivery of reliable and innovative vehicles reinforces consumer beliefs about the brand's trustworthiness (Zeithaml, 1988). Additionally, emotional and social elements—such as the pride associated with owning a Honda or the prestige of the brand—further strengthen consumer trust, particularly in a competitive automotive environment (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Kusumawati et al., 2019).
The findings also highlight the strategic role of perceived value in brand development. Honda's success in consistently delivering and communicating value across its product range not only affects purchasing behavior but also helps foster long-term customer relationships. Prior studies have emphasized that trust can mediate loyalty and advocacy (Chen et al., 2015; Lam & Shankar, 2014), indicating that perceived value contributes not just to short-term brand choice but also to long-term brand equity and consumer retention.
In conclusion, the validation of this hypothesis affirms the theoretical notion that perceived value is fundamental to building and maintaining consumer trust. The practical takeaway for Honda and other car manufacturers is the importance of continuously delivering both tangible and

intangible value to strengthen consumer trust and long-term brand loyalty.

The findings also validate Hypothesis 2, which posits that perceived value has a significant positive effect on Honda's brand image, and that brand image mediates the relationship between perceived value and consumer trust. This result is in line with the *Customer Brand Relationship* (CBR) theory, which emphasizes how consumer perceptions and emotional ties play a key role in forming brand-related trust. When consumers perceive high value—through good product quality, fair pricing, emotional rewards, or social value—they tend to develop a favorable image of the brand.

A positive brand image built on perceived value serves as an important catalyst for trust, acting as a symbolic and emotional signal that enhances credibility, reliability, and a sense of alignment between brand and consumer. This mediating role of brand image implies that trust isn't shaped by value alone, but also by how that value is perceived and internalized through brand impressions. This is consistent with findings from Brakus et al. (2009) and Ahrholdt et al. (2017), who note that strong brand experiences and perceptions foster emotional attachment and trust.

Furthermore, these results highlight that managing brand image is crucial for customer relationship strategies. While providing value is necessary, ensuring that consumers interpret and emotionally connect with that value is equally vital in building lasting trust. Therefore, organizations must not only offer value but also actively shape how that value translates into brand image in the consumer's mind.

The results also confirm Hypothesis 3, which states that brand communication positively affects Honda's brand image, and that this image mediates the link between communication and consumer trust. This suggests that effective brand communication—delivered consistently and credibly—enhances consumer perceptions, which in turn boosts trust in the brand. This aligns with earlier research showing that communication influences consumer attitudes and emotions, which then affect outcomes like trust and loyalty (Molinillo et al., 2019; Delgado-Ballester et al., 2001).

The mediating role of brand image underscores that communication must do more than inform—it should also create emotional and symbolic resonance. A strong brand image, shaped by repeated and thoughtful messaging, lays the groundwork for building trust. This supports the premise of CBR theory, which emphasizes that brand communication should go beyond information dissemination and aim to build associations that cultivate enduring trust.

Hypothesis 4 is also supported, showing that brand communication directly and significantly contributes to consumer trust in the Honda brand. This reinforces the idea that how a brand communicates is vital to earning and maintaining consumer confidence. Communication that consistently conveys core values—such as environmental responsibility, innovation, and ethical practices—helps strengthen the brand's credibility. Studies by Papista & Dimitriadis (2019) and Treviño & Treviño (2021) support this, suggesting that communication plays a key role in forming emotional connections and aligning consumer values with the brand.

In an age where ethical conduct and sustainability are priorities for many consumers, open and meaningful communication fosters trust by signaling transparency and responsibility. Honda's ability to articulate its values effectively strengthens positive consumer perceptions and deepens trust. Hence, communication becomes a vital tool not just for positioning the brand but also for maintaining long-term, trust-based customer relationships.

Finally, the validation of Hypothesis 5 emphasizes that Honda's brand image significantly influences consumer trust. This supports the idea that a strong brand image—built on associations like quality, innovation, sustainability, and reliability—lays the groundwork for consumer trust. When customers hold favorable impressions of a brand, they are more likely to believe in its promises and feel secure in their interactions with it. This is consistent with earlier studies identifying brand image as a key factor in building consumer trust (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2001; Brakus et al., 2009). In Honda's case, the company's reputation for durable products and commitment to sustainability contribute to a brand image that encourages loyalty and confidence. This illustrates that trust is shaped not only through direct transactions but also through consumers' long-term perceptions and emotional responses to the brand. As such, a positive brand image functions as a mental shortcut that facilitates trust, especially in competitive markets where reliability and brand consistency are highly valued.

6. Conclusion

This study extends Customer Brand Relationship (CBR) theory by empirically validating the roles of perceived value, brand communication, and brand image in building consumer trust toward the Honda brand. The results confirm that perceived value and brand communication are key cognitive drivers that shape emotional responses like brand image, which in turn fosters trust—supporting CBR's emphasis on the interplay between rational evaluation and emotional connection.

Moreover, the study highlights brand image as a mediating variable, reinforcing its role as a bridge between brand stimuli and consumer trust. By integrating both cognitive and affective dimensions, this research enriches CBR theory with a clearer pathway of how strong brand relationships are formed in the automotive sector.

Managerial implication

This study provides key managerial implications for strengthening consumer trust in the Honda brand. Managers should focus on enhancing perceived value by ensuring that products consistently meet customer expectations in terms of quality, price, and emotional satisfaction. At the same time, brand communication must be clear, credible, and consistent to reinforce positive perceptions and brand transparency. Furthermore, building and maintaining a strong brand image is essential, as it mediates the impact of value and communication on trust. Together, these strategies can deepen customer-brand relationships and support long-term brand loyalty in a competitive market.

Limitation and Future Reserch

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research focused solely on consumers of the Honda brand in a specific context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other brands, industries, or cultural settings. Additionally, the study relied on cross-sectional data, which restricts the ability to capture changes in consumer perceptions over time. Future research could expand the sample to include different automotive brands or industries, apply longitudinal designs to observe shifts in customer-brand relationships, or explore additional variables such as customer satisfaction or brand loyalty as mediators or moderators to enrich the model further.

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